



Healthy Forests Report

August 1, 2005

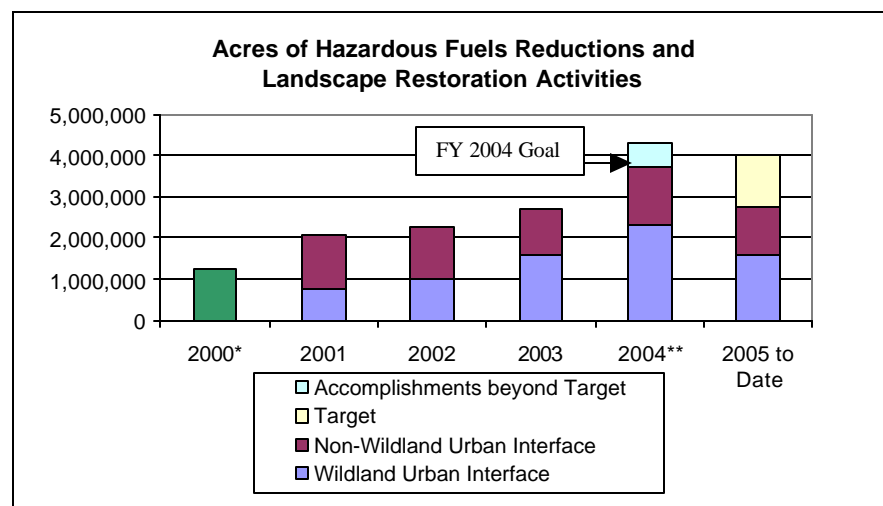
The Department of the Interior (DOI) and the USDA Forest Service are committed to the implementation of the National Fire Plan (NFP) and Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI). The NFP and HFI care for our forests and rangelands, reduce the risk of catastrophic fire to communities, help save the lives of firefighters and citizens, and protect critical natural resources.

HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION & CONDITION CLASS IMPROVEMENT

Hazardous levels of fuels in our forests and grasslands are the most significant risk factor of catastrophic wildland fires. Land managers are addressing this risk by reducing fuel build-ups with two approaches:

1. Hazardous Fuels Reductions are designed to reduce fuels around homes, communities and resources to slow or stop wildland fires from threatening these high-value areas.
2. Condition Class Improvement Activities are designed to reduce the likelihood of losses due to wildland fire by restoring wildlands to more historic conditions. (The condition classes (1, 2, & 3) describe an area's departure from historic conditions; risk of fire-caused losses increases for each higher numbered class, with little or no risk at the Class 1 level.)

Under the direction of the National Fire Plan and using the tools and authorities established under the Healthy Forests Initiative, the Federal land management agencies have reduced the threat of catastrophic wildland fire on over 15 million acres of federal lands since 2000.



* FY 2000 is used as a baseline for reporting, as the NFP was implemented in FY 2001.

Treatment location was not included in reporting prior to FY 2001.

** Acres treated under landscape restoration activities were not reported prior to FY 2004.

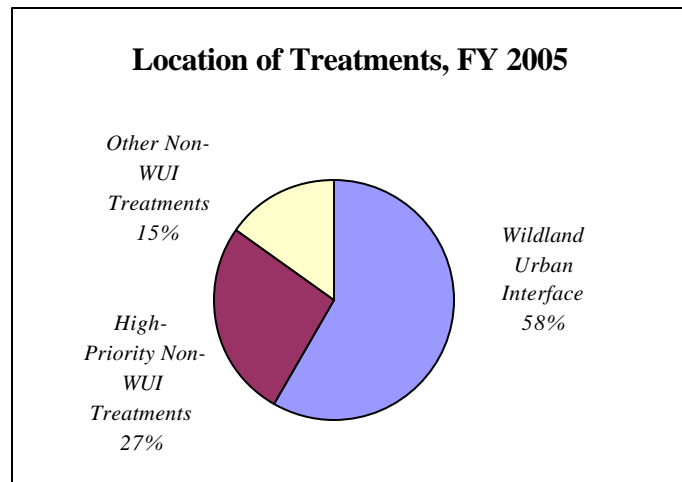
Hazardous Fuels & Condition Class Improvement Activities, FY 2005 (as of 7/25/2005)

	Hazardous Fuels Appropriations		Other Appropriations (Condition Class Improvement Activities)		
Treatment Type	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	Prescribed Fire	Mechanical & Other	TOTAL
Forest Service	1,244,000	144,000	74,000	174,000	1,636,000
DOI	639,000	257,000	32,000	180,000	1,108,000
TOTAL	1,883,000	401,000	106,000	354,000	2,744,000

Hazardous Fuels and Condition Class Improvement Priorities

The Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's hazardous fuels reduction and condition class improvement activities are designed to meet one of three objectives:

1. Directly reduce wildfire threats to homes and communities that are adjacent to or within wildlands, in what is known as the *wildland urban interface* (WUI).
2. Treat areas outside of the wildland-urban interface (non-WUI) that are at greatest risk of catastrophic wildland fire. These *high priority non-WUI treatments* move towards restoring fire to its historical role.
3. Maintain previous treatments to ensure resiliency to catastrophic wildland fire and implement activities that are in line with other long-term management goals (e.g., wildlife management, watershed protection). These *other non-WUI treatments* are also outside of the wildland urban interface.



HEALTHY FORESTS AUTHORITIES

Implementation of activities under the HFI and HFRA authorities can be summarized as a three-step process:

1. NEPA Planning and Decisions – Activities that will require NEPA Decisions are identified (this generally occurs up to 3 years prior to actual project implementation). The planning is typically broad in scope, and may include multiple treatments.
2. Analysis and Preparation – Project preparation and design generally occur in the year prior to implementation. Project scope, location and treatment type are refined.
3. Treatment Planning and Accomplishment – Final planning and implementation occur.

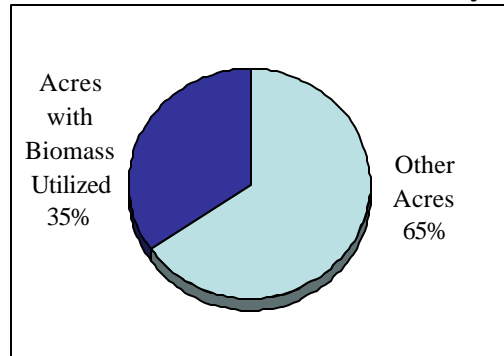
Healthy Forests Activities, FY 2005 to Date (as of 7/25/2005)

Treatments Planned	Treatments Completed	Acres Planned	Acres Completed
1,050	728	249,000	199,000

UTILIZATION OF FOREST BYPRODUCTS

Byproducts removed during hazardous fuels reduction and landscape restoration activities can often be utilized in certain forest products (e.g., timber, engineered lumber, paper and pulp, furniture) and bio-energy and bio-based products (e.g., plastics, ethanol, and diesel). To date, the Forest Service and DOI have treated 610,000 acres mechanically; of these, 35% have included biomass utilization.

Biomass Utilization from all Mechanically Treated Acres



STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS & AGREEMENTS AWARDED

Stewardship contracting includes natural resource management activities that improve land conditions. These projects shift the focus of federal forest and rangeland management towards a desired future resource condition. They are also a means for federal agencies to contribute to the development of sustainable rural communities, restore and maintain healthy forest ecosystems, and provide a continuing source of local income and employment.

	Bureau of Land Management		Forest Service	
2003	2 contracts	300 acres	50 contracts	14,000 acres
2004	22 contracts	15,000 acres	64 contracts	42,000 acres
2005	9 contracts awarded 70 total contracts expected	1,500 acres	16 contracts awarded 56 total contracts expected	7,000 acres
Total	163 contracts / agreements for 80,000 acres*			

*Not all projects in table above were authorized under HFRA.

HFRA TITLE IV: APPLIED RESEARCH

The Forest Service's applied research projects, in partnership with several universities and state forestry agencies, aim to conduct and evaluate different land management practices that reduce problems associated with the current outbreaks of insects and diseases and to translate that information for practicing professionals, landowners, and the public.

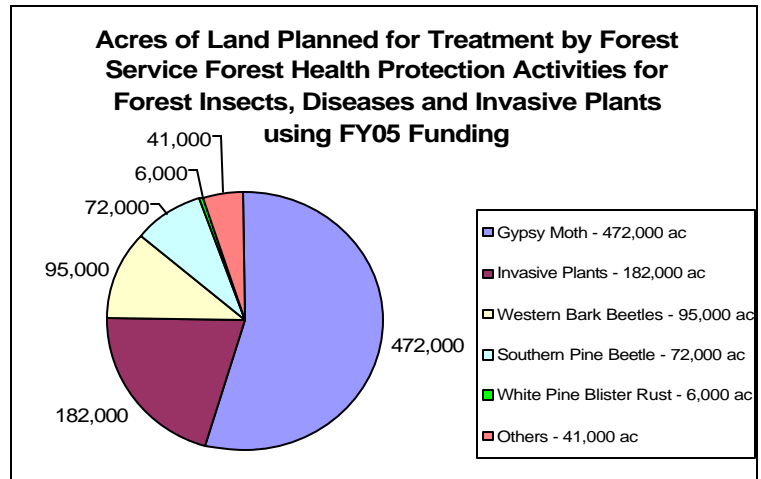
There are currently 6 Silvicultural Assessment and 6 Accelerated Information Gathering projects planned or underway. For more information of the Forest Service's Applied Research Projects under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, please visit:

http://www.healthyforests.gov/applied_research/index.html

INVASIVE SPECIES AND FOREST HEALTH

In FY 2005, Forest Service Forest Health Protection activities include both prevention and suppression efforts and provide resources to restore lands impacted by native and nonnative forest pests on federal, state and private lands. Invasive pests being addressed include: hemlock woolly adelgid, white pine blister rust, gypsy moth, sudden oak death, emerald ash borer, Asian long horned beetle, Mediterranean pine engraver beetle, European wood wasp and invasive plants. Around 868,000 acres will be treated as a result of Forest Health Protection efforts.

Over 98,000 acres for southern pine beetle and 62,000 acres for western bark beetles are proposed for treatments that improve condition class on state, private, and federal lands. These projects are being conducted using a combination of funds provided in FY05 and previous years. To date, over 47,000 acres and 6,400 acres have been reported accomplished for southern pine beetle and western bark beetles respectively.



The *National Strategy and Implementation Plan for Invasive Species Management* (http://www.fs.fed.us/foresthealth/publications/Invasive_Species.pdf) identifies strategic direction for all Forest Service Programs relative to invasive species. The Forest Service "Invasive Species Program" website is available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/invasivespecies/>.

FOREST SERVICE USE OF THE ESA COUNTERPART REGULATIONS

Since May 2004 over 250 Forest Service line officers, and over 500 biologists have both taken training and been certified to use the new Endangered Species Act Counterpart Regulations. Through February 2005 over 50 National Fire Plan projects have used the Counterpart Regulations process, and use is expected to increase. A one-year evaluation of counterpart regulation use to date has begun, and results of that will be used to make any needed improvements in the use of this important tool.

HEALTHY FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES

State, Federal and local partners continue to encourage communities in development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). Anecdotal reporting from the field indicates a building momentum in accomplishing these plans.

Currently, many States awarding NFP State Fire Assistance Grants for fuel hazard mitigation are utilizing a supporting CWPP as a criterion for selection for funding. More information on how HFI is helping communities, including a link to the "Community Wildfire Protection Plans: How-To Guide" can be found at: www.healthyforests.gov/community.